IT'S NOT PLAY VERSUS LEARNING.

PLAY **IS** LEARNING

Making the Case for Play:

a communication toolbox

Making the Case for Play

"Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children play is serious

-Fred Rogers

(Host of "Mr. Rogers Neighborhood)

Childhood is Changing

- The amount of play time has decreased by 15% over the past generation.
- One in six two-year-olds has a television in their bedroom.
- 25% of an average child's free time is spent watching television.
- The average two-year-old spends more than 4 hours a day in front of a screen (television or computer).
- 20% of American children are overweight and a record 8% of preschoolers are overweight.
- Many elementary schools have eliminated or are considering eliminating recess.
- Schools are increasingly moving to eliminate the "playful" part of children's school days, including curtailing recess, gym, sports, and art programs.

Objective: Shift the Paradigm

It’s not play versus learning.

Play **IS** learning.

A Closer Look at Play

-Play is fun and that is why children love it. But play also has an important role in furthering children's social, cognitive, emotional and physical development.

-Research supports an intricate relationship between play and learning.

What Do You Believe About Play?

In order to effectively communicate the purpose of play caregivers must first understand what their beliefs are and how play provides the opportunity for children to learn while increasing children's ability to build their "cognitive, social and emotional developmental muscles."

Understanding the Purpose of Play: Caregivers

What is your (caregiver) philosophy of play?

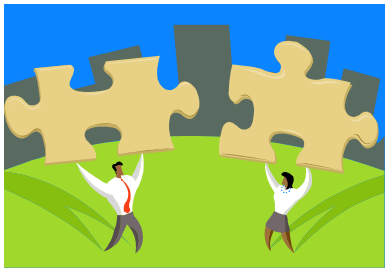
- The first step in understanding play is to determine how you (caregiver) interpret “play with a purpose”

  - What do children learn when they play?

  - What is your role in facilitating “purposeful play”

  - How does play support learning?

Supporting Play:



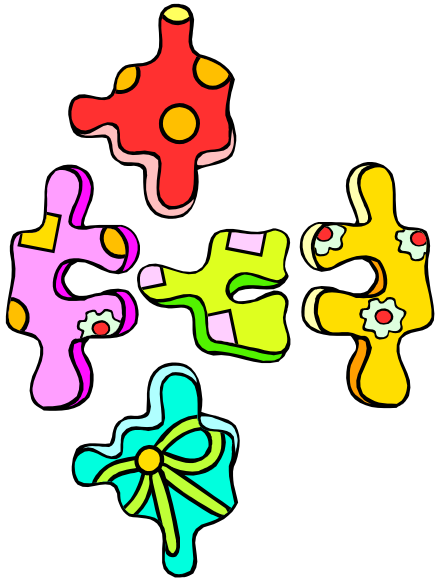
Caregivers can support play in the following ways:

- Organize play situations with an objective as the basis for the selection of materials and toys

- Intentionally select rather than accumulate toys and materials
- Select toys that generate interaction and conversation
- Select toys that are therapeutic

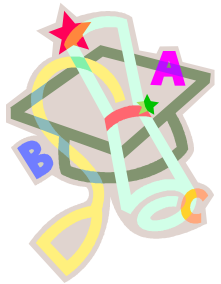
- Allow children to create or reconstruct reality from their own perspectives

Benefits of Play



- increases peer relationships
- Releases tension
- Advances intellectual development
- Increases exploration
- Increases chances of children speaking and interacting with each other
- Expands muscle coordination

Play from a Parent's Perspective



- Parents want their children to learn in a safe environment
- Parents concept of play may come from previous childhood experiences

- Parents may feel pressured to ensure that their children learn in a "traditional" academic environment where concepts of cognitive development are taught in a way that mirrors the elementary school academic environment.
- Help parents to see the parallel between play and cognitive development

WELCOME TO

PARENT ORIENTATION

Where do Parents Obtain Information from You?

1. Signage in your space

2. Messages on sign-in and sign-out sheets

3. Back-pack stuffers

4. Parent meetings

5. Newsletters

Steps in Communicating the Purpose of Play to Parents

1. Determine your philosophy of play.
2. Identify your role in supporting purposeful play.
3. Understand your parents need to ensure that their child is learning.
4. Create an environment that supports play and communicates to parents that learning is simultaneous with play.
5. Identify strategies to present parents with “hands on” opportunities to participate in playful learning experiences.

Choose Your Words Carefully

Link “PLAY” with outcome words that are meaningful to parents.

Incorporate the language of child development when you talk about children’s play.

Daily Interchanges with Parents

opportunities to reinforce the message

"Rachel and Emily learned some new concepts about circumference when they built a snowman today on the playground."

"Billy enjoyed mixing colors today. He kept pointing out how they changed as he added a new color. He particularly liked adding blue to yellow when he realized he could make his favorite color, green."

"Sue and Charlie experimented with several blocks before they constructed a bridge that held the large yellow truck without falling down."

"Meg worked for 20 minutes on creating that ocean with dots of blue paint."

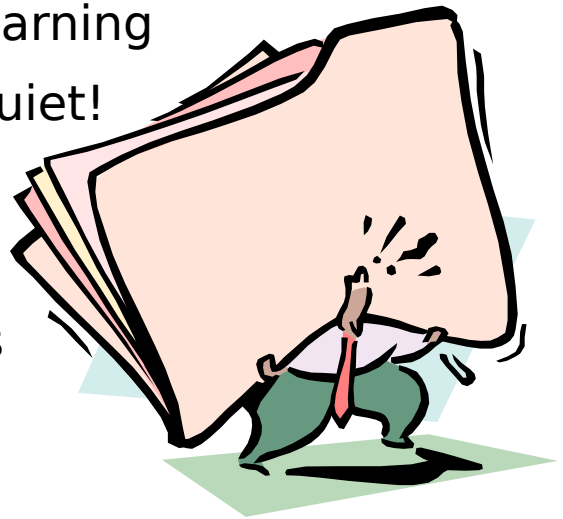
"Jamie learned a new social skill of turn taking while playing Chutes and Ladders with her friend, Jonathan."

"Brandon practiced an early pre-reading skill as he read the recipe to make Purple Cows for snack. He "read" the pictures and counted the cups of grape juice to add to the mixture to make the tasty treat."

Send Play Home

Articles for Distribution

- What is Developmentally Appropriate Practice?
- The Power of Play
- The Best Learning Is Active Learning
- Dynamic Classrooms Aren't Quiet!
- Letting Children Choose
- Process and Product
- Asking Open-Ended Questions
- Earlier Is Not Better



Selected NAEYC Publications

- **Brochures**
  - Toys: Tolls for Learning
  - Helping Children learn Self-Control
  - More Than 1,2,3: The Real Basics of Mathematics
  - Play is FUNdamental

- **Books**
  - Play In The Lives of Children
  - Giving It Some Thought: Cases for Early Childhood Practices
  - Much More Than The ABCs: The Early Stages of Reading and Writing
  - Places and Spaces for Preschool and Primary (Indoors)
  - Spotlight on Young Children and Science
  - Science with Young Children
  - The Living Classroom: Reading, Writing and Beyond
  - Make Way for Literacy: Teaching The Way Young Children Learn
  - Helping Young Children Develop Through Play: A Practical Guide for Parent, Caregivers, and Teachers
  - Literacy Through Play

Making a Case for Play

"It is in play, and perhaps only in playing, that the child is free to be

- D.W. Winnicott